

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION

Please replace current paragraph 29 of the application with the following amended paragraph 29:

[00029] Middle portion 134 in the example shown in Figs. 3-5 takes the form of a horizontal rib 140. Horizontal rib 140 is parallel to base 106 in this example, but could alternatively be non-parallel to base 106. The size of vacuum panels 120, islands 130 and horizontal ribs 140 may vary depending on container size, plastic composition, bottle filling conditions and expected contents. As illustrated in Fig. 9, a first distance D1 can extend horizontally along the exterior surface of the upper portion of the island 130 between the left and right borders of the island 130. A second distance D2 can extend similarly along the exterior surface of the lower portion of the island 130, and a third distance D3 can extend similarly along the exterior surface of the middle portion of the island 130. As shown, the third distance D3 can be less than the first distance D1 and/or the second distance D2.

Please replace current paragraph 32 of the application with the following amended paragraph 32:

[00032] Figs. 6-8 show a container 200 in accordance with a second embodiment of the invention in which islands 230 are shaped like a peanut or figure “8”. Each island 230 has a middle portion 234 that has a reduced cross sectional area as compared to an upper portion 232 and a lower portion 236. The cross sectional areas are taken along horizontal planes of container 200. Unlike the example shown in Figs. 3-5 (where the cross sectional area of middle portion 234 is reduced by reducing its dimension in the radial direction), this embodiment reduces the cross sectional area of middle portion 234 by reducing its dimension in the circumferential direction. In other embodiments, the dimension of middle portion 234 is also reduced in the radial direction. As shown in Fig. 6, a

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first distance D1 can extend horizontally along the exterior surface of the upper portion 232 of the island 230 between the left and right borders of the island 230. A second distance D2 can extend similarly along the exterior surface of the lower portion 236 of the island 230, and a third distance D3 can extend similarly along the exterior surface of the middle portion 234 of the island 230. As shown, the third distance D3 can be less than the first distance D1 and/or the second distance D2.